

Been There, Done That!

Been There, Done That is an approximately monthly postal gaming zine mostly devoted to the play of Diplomacy and its variants, but including the play of other PBM games, especially, as it seems to be developing, Railway Rivals. BT,DT has been liberated from subzinehood in "The Wrapper," or as it is otherwise known, Mark Lilleleht's The Scribblerist just in time to avoid the great TS foldorama. It will, however, continue as an electronically distributed subzine to Ken Hill's The Armchair Diplomat. Got that? Diplomacy was invented by Allan Calhamer and is distributed by Avalon-Hill, and Railway Rivals was invented by David Watts, and was, until very recently, distributed in the US by Games Workshop.

BT,DT is available from the editor/publisher, Tom Nash, who resides at 5512 Pilgrim Road, Baltimore MD, 21214. (301) 254-2836 (don't call between 9 and 10 PM, It's my daughter's bedtime!). CIS PPN - 74676,3310. The cost is .75/issue, or \$6/10 issues, for the incredible savings of \$1.50 if you sub for 10 issues! All players and current standbys will continue to get the zine free, for now. Letters and articles will earn sub credit at the rate of .75/page. So play and/or write, and you get the damn thing free! Trades are actively solicited, but I am probably already trading with you for the Zine Register. Hey, that's cool, send me two copies of your zine in return for ZR and BTDT so I have more for those hungry novices who request the North American Zine Bank sample!

This issue brings several new aspects to BTDT. First of all notice the crisp laser printing! Pretty spiffy, huh? Did I pop for a LaserJet? Yeah, and the national debt is gone too. Seriously, this represents an experiment in cooperation and reliance on several communications media. I typed the thing using WordPerfect, formatted for a LaserJet. Saved the file in WP format, ARCDed it, sent digitally it via modem and phone line to Ken Hill in Columbus, who unarced the file, printed it on his work LaserJet, and mailed the hardcopy masters to me for xeroxing and mailing. If it works, I'll be thrilled, as it means the ZR can continue in its laser printed glory.

This issue also brings the addition of BTDT's first subzine, Jim Goode's Tennessee Rails, a RR subzine set up specifically to run and play test Jim's map of his home volunteer state. When those play test games are over, TR will self-mutate into Texas Rails, which is, I suppose. pretty self-explanatory. Appropriate that TR makes its debut in this, BTDT's special choo choo game issue. Speaking of which, it's here. I solicited articles from a host of hobbyists I knew to have something interesting to say about the play and/or design of railway games. I batted about .500 in getting the articles, and have articles on board by Ed Wrobel, Eric Brosius, Bruce Linsey, and (ta-da!) David Watts, the inventor of Railway Rivals, on the development of that game. Dick Main still threatens, er... promises, to have his 1830 article in before the file goes out over the phone lines, but time is running out! Hope you like the issue, it sure was a lot of typing!

Lots of games, letters, and assorted goodies inside...

And finally, it's official. Mark Lilleleht has formally folded The Scribblerist. It was a squeaky clean fold, with sub money returned and the games provided for. What most of the people speculating in the hobby press over the last few months didn't appear to know was that Mark continued adjudicating his games fairly regularly during the hiatuses between issues. Between the last issue, which appeared in April, and the fold notice, which came in August, there were 3 separate adjudications by flyer. Mark plans to continue to run the games in this fashion, and to do a roving subzine called, I believe, Riotous Assembly (that may be "Righteous," I can't remember and don't feel like rooting around in hobby mail for a half hour looking for the answer). In a move sure to prove that the circle does indeed remain unbroken, RA will have BTDT as, if not a formal, permanent home (roving subzine that it will be), perhaps a summer home of sorts, a semi-permanent home to return to again and again when the urge or need arises. Mark promises a blow-out, gigantic last issue with all the mail and chat he's been collecting and slowly typing over the months. We, of course, wish him well. TS will be missed, but the clean fold shows class.

Game Openings:

Regular Dip: 1989IA, Marv Throneberry, gamestart went out this month by flyer. Opening one more, despite my swearing not to. Signed up: Zarr. Six more needed.

Gunboat: Gamestart inside. You are playing if this is circled. And believe it or not, I am opening another due to popular demand. Two signed up, five needed. You are signed up if this is circled.

Postal Kremlin: Signed up: Wrobel (paid). Smith and Russell interested. Need four to make it a go. I won't keep the list open too much longer if there isn't more interest.

Purest Dip: Hoffman, Reynolds (paid), Mann (paid), and McHugh (paid) signed up. need 3 more. Steve Smith is still "interested."

Colonia VI: I've been persuaded to open a game of the monster, 9 man global variant designed by Fred Hyatt. Signed up or seriously interested: Leamons, Morris, Blau, Heffner, Shapiro, Aube, Winship?, Rifle? Need 1-3 more.

Game Fee is \$5 for all games except Colonia VI, which will be \$10.

LETTERS

Ken Peel: "Now I remember the confusion about you vs. Cameron. When Hood first put together his Dixiecon bid, he suggested a committee of him, Billenness and me, as three supporters of the Dixiecon/Dipcon/World Dipcon bid. Billenness then withdrew himself from consideration, as his interest and time are both quite constrained these days. Some at Dipcon had suggested Cameron as a third committee member, but it seems that there was a spontaneous stab..., er, draft Nash movement by the Dipcon society. Although I certainly had nothing to do with it (and I most *definitely* will not be moving to the Channel), I think that you bring some real assets to the committee. Although Billenness will certainly still be interested in helping to promote the con in Britain, you do have some foreign connections of your own, if I am not mistaken.

"On MOD and Supernova, I thought I had explained my previous arrangement with the novice package custodians, but maybe not. In Billenness' tenure, both Bruce and Woody duplicated and distributed a copy of the ZR free with each S/MOD request. Simon would send them a set of masters when each ZR issue came out, and they did the rest. Once I took over, went full page (reduced type) and seriously porked the thing up, it

became too much of a burden for Bruce and Woody to do that free of charge. At first I just asked them to send me a list of those who purchased the novice packages every month or two, but that is a difficult thing to remember to do, and Woody didn't really keep any records. Finally, I struck the idea of typing up coupons for them to slip inside each S/MOD that went out. The coupon was good for one free issue of the ZR, had my address, and had some lines for the person to put in a name and address. It was then up to the novice to send it to me. If he or she had already purchased a ZR, I put him or her on the list for the next issue. If not, the current issue went out gratis.

"Since the ZR is now more expensive, I don't know what arrangement you might want to work out. You might try out the one-free-issue coupon idea and see if it overtaxes you. Alternatively, you might make it a one-half off coupon (reducing the cost from \$1.50 to 75~). Whatever. But you will probably want to contact Woody and Bruce in any case, as they, together with Peery and Rex Martin of Avalon Hill, are on the front lines of a novice's first contact with the hobby, and that is when the ZR is most useful.

"Did you notice that in the RP, the ZR got the second most number of votes next to DW? Someone commented that the ZR probably now has the second highest distribution of all zines. Given the unusually high number of ZR's that I had to run off this issue (over 200), I think that most certainly is the case (yeah, but how many of them are actual paying customers?...best not to inspect too closely...), although I'm still not sure if the ZR is really a zine. In my mind it is caught somewhere between special purpose publications like Supernova or MOD, and regular working zines that actually do something.

"Next weekend Susan and I will be up visiting Woody in Philly. Mike Mazzer will also be in Philly with his lovely wife Peggy, and the five of us (with maybe Mainardi or someone else in the area) will paint the town red Saturday. See, Tom, don't let McKee get to you. There are lots of old fogeys in Dipdom like us who manage to stay moderately productive. You can join us when you retire from your current high-pitched involvement."

Mickey Preston: "Greetings! You being the semi-knowledgeable type, might have the answer to this question: is there a collected body of works dealing with the strategy and tactics of Diplomacy?

"Or is there really any defined set of tactics to our game? Is it actually that since there are so many variants each turn, it is practically impossible to map anything out more than one or two seasons ahead?

"Are there any great "no-nos" like the ones Susan and I keep breaking, such as never putting an army in Tunis after 1905, or never putting anything in Livonia?

"I ask because I think I need to work on my mid-game and end-game, but I'm not sure about how to go about it."

((Mickey, careful, that very question, posed on the Diplomacy section of CompuServe is what lead me to the Zine Register, Masters of Deceit, and Supernova, and the whole world of PBM Dip. Anyway, in my humble opinion, the best single source of Strategy and Tactics articles is probably the Diplomacy World anthology of Mark Berch's writings. Contains a major section of Mark's S & T articles, many of them excellent. You'll find, however, that most Dip S & T articles focus on the openings, for the reasons you give, i.e. there are so many variables once the game really gets under way. You'll find that a key facet of Berch's theory is that there are no absolute tactical no-nos. Everything depends on the diplomatic context. Another reason why dunderhead McKee favors Gunboat. He is fond of making those very absolutes, like "never open to Livonia as Russia," or "never put an army in Tunis after 1905." All well and good in the sterile

realm of Gunboat, but as Berch states over and over again, limitations on your diplomatic freedom in Dip. In fact one of his articles deals exactly with the Russian opening to Livonia in Spring 1901. When it is precisely, albeit rarely, the exact right opening.

In my current game as Russia in Fiat Bellum, I just convoyed an army from Fin to Livonia, thereby saving Mos and maybe StP as well. Any other move would have guaranteed the loss of both centers. So much for "never put anything in Livonia."

The Berch anthology is available from Larry Peery. Not sure on the price. I can Email it to you if you're interested. As in anything from Larry, expect a tedious and unreasonable delay after ordering.

Otherwise, the best other way to work on mid and late game strategy is to play a lot. Or set up the board and play imaginary games against yourself. Or, (gag, choke...) play a lot of short deadline gunboat.))

More Mickey: "Here's another burning question for his Nashness: What is your opinion of ratings? For Dip players that is. I know The Armchair Diplomat had a rating chart for a bit, but I haven't seen that for eons. Now, I will admit that a ratings system smacks of organization and official "hoobydom" (gasp!). But one occasionally wonders how one stacks up against other players (at least I do). How does the Nash feel about these ratings, since you probably rate highly on most lists?

((The irony is that you, Mickster, mailed me this letter about a month before the Great Ratings Controversy broke out on the message board of the Diplomacy section of Compuserve. So you probably already have my answer. The bottom line is that I feel ratings are fine, are fun, if kept in perspective. Like tournament Dip, they can become odious if they rule the way people play the game. I have, a long time ago, been attacked in Spring 1901 by three players for no other reason, as admitted in the endgame statement of the layer putting together the alliance, than I was at the top of the TAD ratings at the time, and he figured that hurting me was his best chance at improving his own rating. That honked me off. But it's also a fact of life. I play for the fun of the game, and would play whether anything is rated or not. But again, as long as it's not the crucial factor in people's play, I have no problem with it, and it is fun to measure yourself against your current opponents and allies.

If we must have ratings, as I stated in the current TAD discussion, I personally favor, at present, a simple system like the Calhamer Point Count, averaged over the number of gamestarts. Unlike the modified Dragonstooth System we use on TAD it doesn't reward survival over elimination, it doesn't reward for number of centers held, or shortness of the time the win takes. It's simple. One point awarded per game. If there's a sole win, that player gets the whole point, everyone else gets zero. If there's a draw, the players who share in it split the point equally. That's it.

As I said in TAD, once Ken Hill updates the ratings along the DTRS (should be done before you read this), I plan, given the time, to use his raw data to put together an averaged Calhamer Point Count rating system. It will be very interesting to compare the two systems. My hunch is there won't be too much difference. Although the philosophy of the game being the systems varies (is it better to survive than be eliminated, is "strong second" worth anything, how much better than a 2 way draw is a win, should number of centers, or length of time it takes to win, matter?), that the bottom line is that good players will rank high, and poor ones low, in any reasonable system. There will be some variability, of course, but I suspect not a whole lot. I hope to be able to publish the results of the comparison in the next BTDT.)

Yet More Mickey: "Oh yeah, another burning topic - what in Hades has gotten into the Orioles this year? Did Steinbrenner secretly sell the Yankees to Baltimore while only keeping the names of the players intact? Is this the same team that lost the 1st 49 games straight in 1988? Or have you done a replay of "Damn Yankees" and sold your soul to the Devil for a pennant? (Y'know, being a Cubs fan, that's not such a bad idea...)

"PS - can you tell I'm at work and bored silly?"

((Mickey, if anyone knew how the Orioles were doing it this year, they's have their fortune made. Hey, I'm an Orioles fan (and, I admit it, Dodgers too... groan!!!), and I picked them dead last in the East this year. Yet I still don't think they'll win when all is said and done. My preseason pick, the Blue Jays, since getting rid of he who must be the worst manager in history, Jimmy Williams, not to be confused with BTDI's own Jimmy Williams, are coming on strong, 1 game out as I write this, and I really think they'll take it. What's really amazing about the Os is they are doing it with sub par or outright stinko years from players whom they felt they had to get great years from just to have a decent last place year: Sheets, Bradley, Schmidt, the two kids in center, Anderson (back in AAA) and Finley (a real bust so far), Bautista, and Traber. When you look at that, and the current injuries, Billy Ripken, Worthington, and most importantly, the astounding Tettleton, it really borders on the miraculous. They just plain ain't that good!

But how 'bout them Cubbies? What week in September do you predict this year's fold will come?))

Cathy Ozog: "Hello - oh great one - we small people do grovel at your feet. Congrats I guess on World DipCon/DipCon. I think it's first for one like you to rise so quickly. I have offered me help to David Hood for the International pull - but you needn't worry about that - just don't fall oh rising star. Of course Susan ((Welter -Ed.)) told me all about you - so I know the real Tom Nash now. Anyway, I'll have to send you some money soon so I can stay cool and hip. I hate to be left out in the Dark Ages. Sorry about mentioning Gunboat and your name together. It was a mistake!" ((I have heard this rumor persistently since DipCon that I have somehow been elected to the DipCon Committee with David Hood and Pesky Kenny, but nobody has ever "officially" informed me, or even told me what a member does. Kenny Peel implies: "not much." Well, I'll have none of that. If I'm on, somebody let me know, please, and give me something legitimate to work on. David? And furthermore, how did this even happen? I will believe, to the grave, that is was a plot by those nefarious twin demons of pure evil and Gunboat sickness, Smith and McKee, just to wear me out so they stand a chance against me in PBEM games during the course of the next year. Ha!))

More Ms. Ozog: "It's about time that little me wrote to you, but now I have an excuse, see. I always need an excuse to write, I guess that's why I'm just deadwood. First, here, take my money ((gladly)). I can't stand it. I must be hip. How could I be left in the dust with all the deadwood when there is such life in the Hobby now - yes - I know Susan told me not to say nice things to you, but that's the way it goes ((Susan said what? Gee, did I lose her Choo Choo Coleman orders, again?)).

"Second, business before games. As you are the new Zine Register person - making it a very hot thing now - I was wondering if you would like me to give you some help with the British zines. With Simon's fold ((Billenness, of the late Excitement City Unlimited, for those not as hip as Cathy-Ed.)) I'm not sure how many he gets. I get the following - Masters of the Prime, Prisoners Of War, Denver Glont, Ver Tiz, Hopscotch, Pigbutton, C'est Magnifique, Pyrrhic Victory, Will It Lead To Trouble, and

Y Ddraig Groch. Let me know , OK? I could just fill out the basic info and give you a brief description if you like."

((Cathy - YES! Please! Outstanding. I get about 12 British zines, but there is almost no overlap. Of the ones you get, I only receive PoW, WiLtT, and C'Mag. So again, yes please, send along info and reviews.

In fact, I am actively soliciting any and all brief - i.e. short paragraph, reviews of any zines anyone reading this sees. I already have received some nice ones, particularly from Robert Greier, and will take any more I can get my hands on. I'd like to make as much a collaborative hobby effort as is possible. Deadline is September 30 though, so hurry!))

Don Williams: "Enclosed is your 'GM Helper' sheet for your new gamestart and your BN assignation, 1989IA. Please make sure I get the names right. We run-amok-control-freak-power-hungry types just hate to make embarrassing mistakes (but you already knew that being as you're one of us and all, right?). Oh, and thanks for the donation, it really does help.

"Thanks for the kudos on the Runestone Poll thing. You must have great connections; your letter arrived two days before I received notification from Linsey (I was also called by Pete Gaughan and your pal, Ron Cameron, asking me if it was true... seemed to me they were full of shock and disbelief).

"Me, too, though as you mentioned, the poll stuff that goes on is nice fluff and hardly worth any serious chest-puffing. Frankly, Fiat Bellum's taking the RP surprises me because most of my readers are not Linsey fans. Or maybe that should be "were" not; FB's demographics have changed a good deal since last year. That fact is more important, as you may already know, or as may become apparent to you as BTDT matures: zine publishing/readerships seem to be excellent candidates for "inbreeding," sort of a non-biological diminution of a zine's "readership gene pool." Picking up new people - i.e new readers, vs. new players (some of my newest readers are long time hobbyists/players) is not only a way to keep up the reader interest/participation, but keeps things fresh for the pubber too.

"Regarding your promised and much ballyhooed abuse of me - do your worst! You are but a mere gust to a gale force wing (said gale force wind being that arch nincompoop, Bob "Winner" "Iron Fist" Olsen). If I can withstand 5 years of his vitriol, he being a Master of Abuse, as you know - I can certainly tolerate your deranged blitherings, mewlings, and sundried claptrap.

"Hey, I've got dirt to scratch and eggs to lay, so I'm out of here (Hey, I am SUPREME HEAD BOTTLEWASHER now, and I must presume that all this BNC stuff some intrinsic value, right?)."

((First Don, you are truly an embarrassment. As one holder of an English degree to another, using the word "hey" twice in one sentence, even if once was parenthetical, hey, is sinking low. Quite and truly low. Hey, clean up your act. Second, look out: I have my minions of abuse. Vince Leamons, in his great desire to be my supreme toady, harangued Steve Smith with 100 electronic mail messages in one day, just to harass him because Smith displeased me. Can Olsen muster that kind of third party abuse?

And finally, what is impressive about FB's year is its winning both the Runestone and Marco Polls in the same year. What with the very different methodologies, and, one presumes, quite different sets of voter/participants, winning them both is impressive. But then again, it's a lot like what I was saying earlier about ratings, Even with the different underlying philosophies behind different rating systems, or zine polls, quality wins out in the end.

But let me try this. There were 3 zine polls this year. The Runestone, the Marco, and Swider's "Xyns People Read Poll." Let's look at the top 10 of all 3:

Marco Poll

1. Fiat Bellum
1. House of Lords
3. Rebel
4. Kathy's Kornor
4. Penguin Dip
6. Canadian Diplomat
6. Praxis
8. benzene
9. Diplomacy Digest
10. Costaguana

Runestone Poll

1. Fiat Bellum
2. Perelandra
3. Carolina Command & Commentary
4. benzene
5. Penguin Dip
6. Paachendaele
7. Comrades in Arms
8. House of Lords
9. Northern Flame
10. Dark Mirror

X.P.R. Poll

1. Comrades in Arms
2. Canadian Diplomat
3. Praxis
4. House of Lords
5. Rebel
6. Fiat Bellum
7. Vertigo
8. Diplomacy World
9. Perelandra
10. Kathy's Kornor

Nota Bene: Pete Gaughan disqualified his own zine Perelandra from the Marco, since it ran in that zine, and he felt it would have an unfair advantage. Note the high number of zines that appear in top ten of at least two. If you go to top 15 or 20, the number that appear in all 3, is quite high. Northern Flame was 13 in XRP and 12 in Marco, Penguin Dip was 19 in XRP, Canadian Diplomat was 12 in Runestone, Passchendaele was 14 in Marco and 16 in XRP, CIA was 16 in Marco, Rebel was 14 in RP, etc. The two major discrepancies are Praxis, a solid top 10er in both XRP and Marco, and 56 in RP after winning it last year; and Dark Mirror, 10 in RP, but 79 in XRP and 41 in Marco. Both of these, can, I believe, be explained on timing. XRP and Marco were conducted in late fall, early winter, when Praxis was still a going concern, sort of, and Dark Mirror had put out about 1 issue. The RP voting period ran through July. As Praxis disappeared, sort of, with no announcement of a fold, and a very occasional, half hearted issue, feeling apparently soured. Dark Mirror, on the other hand, quickly became an excellent chat and game zine, capturing, obviously, many readers' fancy. A fact making all the more ironic and disappointing its recent severe problems with, at the most charitable, an irregular publishing schedule.

Now then, assigning a zine a 10 for finishing first in any of the 3 polls, 9 for finishing 2, etc down to 1 for finishing 10, I hereby announce the overall Zine Poll winners for 1988-89, with the permanent asterisk that Perelandra should, and would have, been in the top 3, probably, were it not for Pete's noble self-disqualification:

1. Fiat Bellum - 25 points
2. House of Lords - 20 points
3. Comrades in Arms - 14 points
3. Canadian Diplomat - 14 points
3. Rebel - 14 points
6. Praxis - 13 points
6. Penguin Dip - 13 points
8. Perelandra - 12 points **** (disqualified from Marco Poll)
9. benzene - 10 points
10. Kathy's Kornor - 8 points

Now how's that for a nice, pointless exercise? Mickey, can you tell that I'm at work and bored silly?))

Ed Wrobel: "Tom - I would be honored to appear next to the highly revered and extremely hip Dick Martin in BTDT, despite my moral objection to "digest" zines. Get big, Tom, get with it. ((Highly revered? Extremely hip? We must be talking about different Dick Martins. This is the one who publishes Retal, not the one on Laugh-In. Besides, although your choo choo

article is ready to be typed, Mr. Martin's promised 1830 article is still nowhere to be seen. I did get a frantic electronic mail message the other night saying "when was that deadline?" but it remains to be seen if it arrives)).

"We did a choo-choo issue of Politesse some time back. There was an article by Louis Newman on Empire Builder. Louis has left the greater WARTHOG ((Washington Area Retinue of Tacitly Highly Organized Gamesters... Ed is Big Tusk, First Shoat, the Porcine Prince, thereof - Ed.)) service area, alas. Matt Ellis wrote one on Rail Baron which was later picked up for "The General" (same issue as Ed Fahrmeier on 1830 - did you see that one?). ((No - Ed.))

"Actually, I don't know what to say about choo-choo games except that I tend to like them. I expect I could even learn to love 1830 if I ever mastered the rules. I recently played Merchant of Venus for the first time. Have you ever played that? I really liked that. It's a choo choo game set in space. Would you be interested in that angle? Or would you prefer to stick to traditional RRs?

"Sorry for being so un-hip. Having been out of Dipdom for a few years, I have only vague notions of what's hot, what's bad, what's declassé, and what's banal. Actually, it appeared to me at first that nothing much had changed, but I see now that zines such as BTDT are at the cutting edge of Great and Significant Revolution in DipDom. You are, however, too old to be a brat. But good luck in ending feuds with sarcasm. Perhaps Olsen could help you out on that.

((Actually if the famed Winner helps me out with anything, I would prefer it to be the ongoing abuse and total humiliation of BNC Williams. I'm not trying to use sarcasm to end any feuds, just keep my own ass out of them.))

"I went looking into my archives for the Politesse issue on rail games but didn't find it. I don't have much to say on strategy and tactics. I have been contemplating a more personal and universal approach but I don't know if these vague notions will congeal. I'll try.

"Congrats on the birth of Samuel Charles. Nice name. SO is "Emily" (also my daughter's name - she's two; my son is five.)"

((Ok, Ed. Since both you and the inestimable Ms. Ozog both have concerns r.e. being hip, cool, in, with it, etc., allow me to share my personal expertise. Ready? Here goes:

WHAT'S HOT

Fiat Bellum
Dick Martin
Susan Welter
Tom Nash
Nash-Smith
Rival KGO/ZDs
Melinda Holley
Audrey Jaxon
Kathy Caruso
RRGTs

WHAT'S NOT

Praxis
Julie Martin
Cathy Ozog
Ken Peel
Linsey-Byrne
Smutty Letters
Kathy Caruso
Melinda Holley
John Caruso
Dip Demo Games

Eric Brosius	Bruce Linsey
CDO	PDO
DAA (Dip Alliance of Australia)	CDO
Doug Acheson	Bob Acheson
BTDT	The Scribblerist
Canadian Boardman Numbers	Rival Miller Numbers
Comrades in Arms	Bushwacker
Colonia VI	Cline 9
Final Conflict	Youngstown
David Hood	Larry Peery
Peery-Canada	Martin-Coughlan
Jeff McKee	Bob Olsen
Mickey Preston	Conrad von Metzke
The New Zealand Hobby	The British Hobby
OPERABLE	Foot in Mouth
The Walrus	The First Citizen
PBEM	PBM
Play by Fax	PBEM
Lee Kendter Jr	Lee Kendter Sr
Kremlin	Titan
Brad Wilson	Dick Martin
The Brat Pack	The Bad Boys
The Columbus Crowd	The MadLads
Freddy Krueger	Steve Smith
Doug Winship	Bimbo the Wonder Dog
W.A.P.	D.I.A.S.
PBM Railway Rivals	PBM Empire Builder
The DipCon Site Vote	The Runestone Poll
Randy Grigsby	Ran Ben Israel

The Class of '88 Folds

The Class of '88

The MetaDiplomat

The MegaDiplomat

Eric Klein

Melinda Holley

There. I hope that clarifies things for you all. Any more questions, just forward them to me, the final arbiter of all things hip, chic, and cool, Diplomatic. No, no, don't thank me, just send money. And remember, make the check out to me, not McKee!))

More Ed Wrobel: "Got your CloneCon report and will feature it prominently in the September issue ((of Politesse - Ed.)) along with your campaign for BAT-hood. I have a feeling our BAT controversy can be milked for several more months before becoming boring. If only Byrnes would re-surface! I would call him but he's probably not interested. I think he's going through some major change of life of some kind.

"Gosh, I'm excited to be back in DipDom, sort of. I know I won't make the same mistakes again!"

((Enquiring minds want to know, Mr. Big Tusk, First Citizen, Grand High Poobah of the Shoats... what mistakes were they? We expect, nay demand, a full recitation of your "mistakes" in the next BTDT or the BAT-purge shall be transformed to a major "Walrus-purge." Does this mean we should not hold our breaths waiting for the appearance of "Feudesse II - The Sequel"????))

David Orne: "I think all those fraternity parties in college have finally caught up with me. The brain calls that were assigned to remember that I had sent you a sub or game fee must be on the fritz. AS I remember it, you sent me BTDT #6 along with a note asking me to sub. I seem to remember sending card which basically said, "Thanks, but no thanks." I think I told you, quite tactfully I might say, that I wasn't able to play in games over the computer because I didn't have one (this is being produced at work, but don't tell my boss!). You sent me a card claiming BTDT is not a PBEM zine, and you attempted to guilt me into subbing. I don't believe I replied at all to that ploy.

"Then yesterday I received #7, and a note urging me to make up my mind about playing in a game. I don't quite understand this, but as I said, I'm carrying my share of dead grey matter around with me. At first I thought, "well if he's going to send me a free zine I might as well read it." Now I realize that is the same tactic fanatics use at airports. You're not a Hare Krishna are you? After looking over the zine, I decided to bow to the enormous pressure you're putting on me. Alright, alright, I'll do it! Here, take my money, now let me be! Have pity on me; my first zine was The Scribblerist, OK?

((OK. And the blessed Avatar of the Divine, the Guru, the light, the Walrus and First Shoaat himself, who sends me out selling flowers and hawking zines that I may receive his blessed bliss, the Wrobel himself, Guru of the sect of the living Hog, cleverly disguised as a gaming club, thanks you as well.))

"To be honest, after reading the zine I found the letter column to be quite entertaining, and I remembered that is one of the things I liked when it was a subzine. Your sense of humor is pretty good, but don't print that, I'll deny it straight faced. I can't believe I'm subbing to a zine where the pubber claims to know something about music and doesn't know that Donald Fagen and Walter Becker were, are, and once again will be Steely Dan!

((Of course I knew that... it's just that I too have my share of dead ones, and I was typing the damned thing very late at night, went blank, and did

not at all feel like getting up to look through albums and get their names of a record jacket! What do you mean "will be again?" Are they re-forming? In this summer of nostalgia and old groups re-forming, I wouldn't be surprised. I'm getting sick of it, aren't you? I can't wait until summer 2009. The days the TV will broadcast show after show dedicated to "the 20th anniversary of the Summer of nostalgia." Interviews with people... "were really you at a Remembering Woodstock taping of the Oprah show, or you just one of the thousands who claim to have been? Where were you when you first heard a 20th anniversary salute to Sgt Pepper? Do you remember the feeling of mystery, of excitement, of cosmic wonder, when you suddenly realized... 20 years ago men walked on the moon? Ah those were the really good old days, when we really remembered the good old days..."

"Thank you for enlightening me on the Fugs, a group I had never heard of and which has obviously faded into obscurity. Before you vent retribution on my head, please remember that I had to suffer through the disco craze during my high school and college years. That's one of the reasons I turned to jazz-rock fusion..."

"I think the interview idea is a great one, and I hope you will keep it up. I've only been playing for a year now, and I would read all these letters about feuding and personalities and have no idea what they were talking about. Slowly, I think I'm learning more about the past of the hobby and the people involved, and I'm sure the interviews will help."

"I've never been to a con, and don't plan on it either. I had a couple of chances when I was in college and played (groan) D & D. I'm much better now, thanks for asking."

"Congrats on the arrival of Sam ((Thanks. Want to babysit some weekend?)). Robin Williams once told of a dream-turned nightmare he had soon after the birth of his son. It covered the spectrum of accomplishments his son might be capable of during his life, starting out with an MC announcing: "And now, receiving the Nobel Prize for Peace, Robin Williams Jr.," and ended with a 40 year old man behind a counter asking "You want fries with that?"

"Now will you send me a sample of the ZR and sub info for it? Also, please send me rules for the other games you're running? I don't know how to play them and I like to follow along, especially if there's press. ((I plan to collate a few ZRs tonight, and send you and Susan Welter copies, as well as a few to pubbers of a couple more zines I've heard tell about. There will be about 20 zines listed in the next ZR that were not in the last one. If you don't get rules for Railway Rivals and Kremlin soon, bug me. I forget those kind of things quite easily.))

"Enlighten me as to what Wallace Nicoll when he says "Ta" for BTDT? Is it a compliment or put-down? ((Brit slang for "thank you," I believe, right Wallace?))

"You're giving up on the Dodgers? Have you finally seen the light? No matter how bad the situation gets in Cincinnati, I'll always be a Reds fan ((I'll show great restraint and avoid the all-too-easy straight line with a response like: "I'll bet.")) I was in high school when they won back-to-back Series in 75-76, and I could see Riverfront Stadium from my bedroom window in Newport KY. Get out your atlas and look it up. I practically grew up at Riverfront and could not imagine cheering for another team. I am very happy with the Bengals now, after all the poor years they've had lately... where was I? Oh yeah. It sounds to me, with your dumping the Dodgers and picking the Orioles, that you may be one of the worst types of sports fan imaginable... a FRONTRUNNER! But then again, you do live up there, so maybe not."

((I plead innocent. What I meant was I was giving up on hoping for the Dodgers to win the pennant, or even be a factor in the race this year. Hey, the Dodgers left NYC, my home town, in 1957, when I was 4 year old, and I

still root for them. That's frontrunning? I've always liked the Os since moving to this area in 1982. In fact, I can PROVE I am a loyal fan regardless... last year, when the Os were the worst team with the worst record in baseball, I went to about 10+ games. This year, when they've shocked and delighted us all, I've been to only 3. Of course Sam has a lot to do with that!))

"George Mann is scary, I agree. He sent me an unsolicited sample awhile ago, and my reply boiled down to "Thanks, but no thanks. I've got better things to do with my time two overweight and over-the-hill weightlifters do choreographed moves for 15 minutes and call it "sport."" And as a personal reply to his question, not only is Florida not thought of as paradise by everyone up north, it's not thought of in those terms by all of us living here. For the right price for my house, and a good job offer, there are a number of places I'd be willing to move to. Of course, Lakeland is not on the beach and I'm surrounded by retired folks. SO out of your "beaches, sun, and women" that you take for granted, all that's left for me is the hot Florida sun. And you'd have to pay me an awful lot to get me to live down there near Miami like you do.

((Aw geez, David. Here my wife and I just made arrangements for a trip to Florida in October to interview for jobs in Port Saint Lucie, getting all excited about finally fulfilling our fantasy about living on the beach someplace warm, and you go and destroy our illusions. I think we'll still take our trip though, and make up our own minds.

Though I agree with you r.e. professional wrestling, I love Son of Flip for the simple reason that George and his cohort Eric have, it is evident, so much fun putting the zine together and out, that I find it infectious.))

"To Mickey Preston: it's good to see a fellow Kentuckian in the hobby... ((sorry David, Mickey's a very recent exile to the Bluegrass state from his beloved ChiTown, and probably wouldn't appreciate your fond recollections of UK basketball in the 70s.))

"To Ed Wrobel: What do you do? Work in the Pentagon? Where do you come up with these acronyms? Also I never thought I'd ever hear anyone accuse Frank Zappa of going commercial.

Stven Carlberg: "... on another subject - I read in your zine that you're in charge of the Diplomacy Zine Register, so I'll bet you can advise me on something else. About a year ago, I signed up for a game in Touche, a zine which has been coming out more and more sporadically ever since. I don't think it would exactly be considered an "orphan" game, but we're still waiting for Spring 1901 moves to be published and everybody else I've talked to about it wishes we were in a different zine. Is there a regular procedure for transplanting games like this? If there's not, is there any chance you'd be willing to take over and GM the game for BTDT? I think all seven players would agree to move the game with or without the consent of Ramon Lazaro pubber of Touche). Also there's the question of fees. I think we put out something like \$10 each for fees and/or a sub, and if nothing else, it bothers my sense of fairness that Lazaro got our money for nothing. Any suggestions?

((As of July, at DipCon I believe, the new head of the US Orphan Service is BTDT player Vince Lutterbie, at 1021 Stonehaven, Marshall MO, 65340. I'm not familiar with the exact procedure used, having fortunately been spared the worst case scenario of the Dip player with a time and money commitment to a game. I believe, but really am not sure, that USOS will transfer a game if all the players wish, and there game is not being adjudicated, even if the GM is opposed. Again, I believe that's the philosophical difference between it and the Orphan Games Project, but Ken Peel can verify this as Robert Sacks has explained that to him numerous times, as both Ken and

Robert have noted to me. I would suggest contacting Vince with the details, including length of time since sending in Spring '01 orders, names and addresses of all players, any response, if any, from Lazaro to attempts to find out what's going on, etc. If and when the game does get transferred, I'd be glad to GM it myself, or let Susan Welter guest GM it here, as I know she's expressed interest in GMing an orphaned game.

What more can be said about pubbers who fold messily or leave games and players hanging? Yes, it happens, yes, it's an inevitable part of the hobby, unfortunately. But it stinks. And, it's mail fraud. If you solicit subs or game fees through a sample, or a pubber-submitted blurb in ZR or another zine listing, get the money and don't provide the service advertised, it is mail fraud. Not having been in the hobby too long, my experiences with this sort of thing are still fairly limited. When I first got a copy of ZR and a zine bank sample pack, I sent out sub money and game fees to a large number of zines and novice services. The only ones I got burned by were Jeff Zarse and Elmer Hinton, both of whom cashed my check and NEVER sent me Random Thought or Word to the Wise. Post cards to both months later produced no response. Ironically, Hinton recently sent me a "courtesy" copy of Kaissa wherein he notes my taking ZR from Ken, and hailing the transfer, slamming Ken for, it seems, pointing out these kinds of problems and eventually dropping Hinton's listing.

One of the Bad Boys' points in dropping from the hobby was that nobody had a legitimate beef with a pubber folding and not returning sub fees. That if the \$5 or whatever you sent was something you really needed, and the loss of which made a difference, you shouldn't have wasted it on a zine in the first place. Francois Cuerrier has recently made the point that as most zines operate at a rather sizable loss, and you have gotten better value for the money you sent in as a sub all along, you again, don't have a legitimate beef with not getting your last \$2.45 or whatever back. Both of these arguments miss the point that if you commit to provide a service for a fee, it is not only unethical but totally illegal not to provide the service or return the fee, even if the amount of money is so small nobody will actually DO anything about pursuing the matter. Yes, the \$5 I sent Zarse is minuscule, irrelevant, meaningless. The point is, it was my money, and if I want to waste it, I have the right to decide how to. I'd rather blow it on almost anything then charity the recipient of which is Jeff Zarse or Elmer Hinton.

Since then I've experienced as a player or subber 3 clean folds, Excitement City Unlimited, Costaguana, and The Scribblerist, where sub money was refunded and the games appropriately carried on by flyer or rehoused.

In addition I am a subber to Praxis, which one would certainly assume has folded messily without such provisions, were it not for Stewart's tendency over the last year to drop an issue in your mailbox every 3-months just when you've given up (i.e. the last issue, in May, came out the very day the C.D.O. listed him as folded). Dark Mirror (to which I sub and play in)'s future must be considered dubious at best by the fact of currently being 3 months late, following on the heels of a two-month delayed issue. Tim Moore, the room-mate of Audrey Jaxon, DM's pubber, has informed me recently that he is going to adjudicate and mail out the games this weekend, but the future of the zine itself is still in doubt. Too bad, it really was an excellent effort.))

Susan Welter: "As if y'all haven't figured it out, we PBEMers have totally confused the PBM world as to what (how) we CIS/PBEMers do. Peery, even after hours of chat and online demonstrations, still thinks we play a version of (<gag>) A/H Computer Diplomacy. Don Williams came up to me and suggested that we should apply for Boardman numbers! I did my best to

straighten out their thinking, but I'm not sure I explained us well. I've a feeling that its the 'E' between 'B' & 'M' that confuses them. Or --- we use computers to correspond & order rather than (use the) the postal service. What became my standard line was that we PBM the same as anybody else. We just do it faster. When Don 'suggested' that we should get Boardman numbers I kindly told him that we do [have them assigned] and will continue to do so and that Ken Hill is our 'Zine editor and individual GM's here don't have to worry about it. In other words, I kept my Irish temper to meself.

"Anyway --- youse guys, HELP! Write to those-who-would-be-Ghods and tell them what we, here on CIS, are all about. On the Dixiecon committee for next year is Bob Odear in charge of Electronic Mail. Who????? Local bulletin boards are terrific (I've yet to find one in Minneapolis that runs a regular Dip game; there's 32 local BBS's at my last count) but....!!

"Any ideas? Comments? Thoughts? Arguments? I refuse to have PBEM Dip put into the minds of PBMer's that ALL we do is play A/H Comp Dip.

"the end of Sus's soap box-----S"

((Don't know what else I can add. You said it all. Don Williams' confusion about PBEM and Boardman Numbers is the easiest part to explain and understand. Don is the official village idiot of the Dip community and can't tie his own shoelaces or adjudicate a game, much less remember who assigns BNs to. Poor dear, the BNs were thought of as a sort of vocational therapy for him, but it may be beyond him even at that.))

George Mann: "Well, I just heard that The Scribblerist is semi-folding. I can understand how publishing can get out of hand.

"As to your last issue. Yes, I still want to trade with BTDT! Where else will I be able to see Lilleleht get bashed? Congratulations on your new kid. I'll sleep a few extra hours for you.

"No the C.D.O. hasn't approached me about a block of Machiavelli numbers. Canadians are wimps anyway and I don't think there's a one of them with a Machiavellian attitude. I wouldn't have said such a thing a year ago, but James Wall has pointed out the weakness of Canadian Dip players.

"Oh yeah, who's Jeffrey Lerner? ((My youngest reader and the person who has taught me all I know, admittedly not much, and all I care to know, about professional wrestling. In return, I have turned him on to Dip, Empire Builder, and dragged him to a CloneCon where he ACTUALLY MET KATHY CARUSO (she said "I love little kids," and I thought "yeah, with cole slaw on the side."), and fell in love with Civilization. Who's getting the better of this exchange?)). Good luck with the ZR. I'm sure you're going to do a good job.

"As some of my readers are wanting more Dip "news," letters, stuff, etc, I guess I'll be stepping that up. If you have anything to say to my demented subbers, followers, etcetera, feel free to write and save them. I'll try to find a way to liven it up - any ideas? ((Yes - get Orne to write a regular monthly column on "Why I Hate Wrestling." Then write your own response. Let the sparks fly. Hell, it'd be almost as good as me and McKee about gunboat. Speaking of the Devil...))

"Oh yeah, who's Jeff McKee anyway? I never heard of any of these people. Where do you get your subscribers from? ((Certainly not the beer line at the local wrasslin' event at the Coliseum. Which explains why you've never heard of them. This is a zine for a better class of folk, George. And besides that, about half these folk are PBEM players who rarely venture into the wider world of PBM.)) Are they the street people who will be counted by census takers on March 25, 1990 between 2 and 4 AM? That later statement is a true event that will be happening!

"As Sacks says the MNC/UTC issues numbers for Machiavelli. I guess I can issue Machiavelli numbers for Diplomacy games and all other non-Machiavelli numbers. I think that's Sacks' logic!"

((Well, if you and Robert get into it over Machiavelli numbers (an issue clearly as earth shattering in its import as Canadian BNs, rival MNCs, 3, count 'em, 3 zine listings, and a brain dead BNC who "suggests" people he has already given BNs to apply for same, I have a suggestion for dealing with it... 2 out of 3 falls in a steel cage.))

Cal White: "... On to more important matters - Congrats on that young 'un. Don't expect to catch up on that sleep you're missing, not for at least 30 years anyway ((What a ray of sunshine you are Cal.)).

"Beety-Deety is looking good. I like seeing an active letter column ((I do too. But after this one I'm not to keen anymore on typing one!)), and that interview thing is a good idea. Bruce McIntyre just finished doing an interview with Bruce Linsey that I enjoyed.

"If all your feuds are off, how about declaring yourself a "Feud Free Zine?" I can send you the rules if you like. It's not really a very serious clique and the rules aren't exactly iron clad. The whole idea is to make the point that many hobbyists just want to have a good time in Dipdom without getting involved in the bitterness of a feud. Disagreements are fine, but they should be mature disagreements, not juvenile name calling." ((You mean give up bashing the living daylights out of McKee, Smith, Williams, et al? No way, Jose! Besides, if feuding is verboten in Northern Flame, what exactly is Peery vs. The Sovereign Nation of Canada (when Larry feuds, he feuds big... takes on whole countries at a time!)? A mature disagreement? C'mon Cal... wouldn't that thingie pass for the F word? Seriously though, although I have read your "Feud Free" statement and agree with the bulk of it, I don't think I would want to label my zine as such. My feeling is that it carries a connotation in many people's mind of wishing to avoid strong feeling and controversy at all costs, and could possibly put a damper on people's ability to speak their mind openly and fully when contributing to the zine. I could be way off base, but that's how I see it from this viewpoint.))

Al Tabor: "Captain Beefheart is/was one of my heros! I ordered Trout Mask Replica. (Not normally stocked in Pearl's Emporium, Madison, S Dak. Try ordering this record from a 65 year old Norwegian woman who normally sells Andy Williams without getting beat up. [You're saying bee what!]) I listened to it a lot trying to make sense of out it. Then I saw him live. (He used to tour with Ry Cooder.) And suddenly it all made sense. I've heard him play Veterans Day Poppy 4 times over the course of 10-12 years with 3 different bands and each time it was played exactly the same note for note, nuance for nuance. I understand he's doing well as a painter now days. Today's audio environment: Dirty Dozen Brass Band, Voodoo; Stan Ridgeway, Mosquitos; and Hunkpapa. Thanks for the later."

((Al, now you've got me talking on a subject on which I can wax passionate... the great, the magnificent, the purely brilliant unknown American genius, Don Van Vliet, AKA Captain Beefheart. Anyone with a copy of Trout Mask Replica is, well... I don't know, but clearly heads and shoulders above something else. In fact, I've just checked and I am embarrassed to say that of all the Beefheart albums, that's the one I don't seem to have. Seems like I used to. I dunno, either it disappeared in one of the 17 moves I made between ages 18-35, like so many great albums I once owned, or I listened to friends' copies so much in late high school that memory tricks me. Either is a plausible explanation. Anyway, I believe I have every other Beefheart album ever released, from the astonishing "Safe As Milk," which if you listen to it and realize it was released in 1965,

the same year the Beatles, for instance, were doing "Beatles 65," becomes even more incredible for the extent to which it was light years ahead of its time, to "Ice Cream For Crow," released in 1982 and the last I ever heard from him. The man is truly an unrecognized genius, and if, as a rather fatuously self-important article in Time last week on the Stones and the nostalgia epidemic in rock this summer, suggests, rock songs and albums have become the new American literature (gimme a royal break before I barf all over the keyboard... it actually compares Springsteen to Fitzgerald!!), then "Trout Mask Replica" is clearly the "Finnegan's Wake" of the new literature. A creative tour de force, truly original, creative, and personal, as perhaps nothing else in rock history. A virtual reinvention of the idiom in one shot (as opposed to the slower process of reinventing themselves, and the idiom, exemplified by the Beatles' gradual evolution from 1964-69). But, like the book, dense to the point of impenetrability without a serious commitment in time and effort. An album you have to work your butt off to "get." Not for the casual listener. Do you still have it Al? Could you tape it for me? I've been looking through the CD bins for it, but like the Fugs (thought we'd get through an issue without mentioning them, eh?), I don't think Beefheart represents a big enough market to warrant reissuing on CD.

Glad you like Hunkpapa. Under the tutelage of my music guru Jim Bob Burgess, I have gotten an older Throwing Muses album, before the attempt to gain marketability that "Hunkpapa" is supposed to be. Therefore, "House Tornado" is on my current playlist. I've also, at the explicit orders of Dick Martin, gotten the venerable B-52s new CD, "Cosmic Thing," and I love it! Although there is no one song as good as "Private Idaho," or "Rock Lobster," (although "Love Shack" comes close) it is, in my humble opinion, their strongest album yet. Also on the current playlist: "Indigo Girls" - Indigo Girls, "Mr. Music Head" - Adrian Belew, "Guitar/Vocal" - Richard Thompson (a retrospective collection dating back to Fairport Convention to the present, mostly of out-takes and little known works), "Scatterlings" - Juluka, "Avalon Sunset" - Van Morrison, "Steel Wheels," - the World's Greatest Over 40 Band, "Yellow Moon," - the Neville Brothers, and "Iron Man," - Pete Townsend. I've also bought the new CDs by Pere Ubu, Dr. John, and King Sunny Ade, but haven't had a chance to listen yet.))

Jimmy Williams: "My Dear Thomas, there are at least 13 Jimmy Williamses in the world and I have met seven of them. You are imprecise to call Jimmy Williams a "crazed madman." I much prefer homicidal maniac, or pathological killer, or better yet, heterocidal apathetic!! There are not enough bullets in the world to create a perfect society!

"But I will tell you what really pisses me off - that your brilliant editorial comments are introjected into the hypnotic drumbeat of my prose! - The brainwashing, mind-controlling rhythms of my rhetoric are thus bowdlerized into limp, flaccid impotency!!!

"Perhaps, subconsciously, this is what frightens you most: the Raw Rutting Sexual Power of the Magnificent Blonde Neitschean Beast, the Ubermensch who, by the Cosmic Inevitability of his Genetic Prowess will make Slaves of all Lesser Beings!... ((Capitalization is Jimmy's - Ed.)) Well, that certainly frightens me!

"Well, I am used to all this! ((Jimmy, Jimmy... 2 consecutive sentences starting with "Well." Tsk, tsk! Bad as Don Williams. Is there something about the name Williams that makes one mangle the language?)). These mice should throw themselves upon their knees in abject submission and gratitude - that I have deigned to confront them with their Deepest Dipsychological Fears!

"Yes, Dip is all Psychosexual! Emphasis on the "Psycho!" Emphasis on the "Sexual!"

"Of course there aren't any women in the game to dominate and conquer - with which to breed more World Historical Individuals - if there isn't... well then you know what that means! Overtones of homosexual panic!

"Overtones, hell!

"We are all in Maximum Security boys, and Needs Must Be Satisfied!!! Oh My God! I have just given voice to the Deepest Abiding Anxiety of All! Homosexual Aggression!!!

"Well, that's Dip! Now, what are we going to do about it? Well, first off, we certainly aren't going to come right and say it, we don't want to scare anyone off. Where will we find victims then?

"That's why I find draws so disgusting. These people agree to "do it." There is no Terror! That's sick! These people ought to be locked up! - In a Dip game with me! AAAAahahahaha! AAAAahahahaha!"

((I know, I know, most of you are thinking... why does he print this drivel? It just encourages Jimmy to write more. Why isn't Nash like all those responsible editors who fling his letters into the waste basket? Well, folks, I'm just a softie, I guess. Besides, he is, uh, unique, no?))

THE GAMES

Standby List: Stephen Dorneman, Stan Johnson, John Crosby, George Mann, Ron Cameron, Mickey Preston, Robert Greier, Tim Moore, Vince Lutterbie, Jimmy Williams, George Rifle, Mike Morris, Jason Bergmann, Jack McHugh, Steve Heinowski, and Paul Milewski.

Choo Choo Coleman

1988HE

Spring 1908

ITALY, GERMANY, TURKEY, PLAY MUSICAL CENTERS IN THE BALKANS. TURKEY PLAYS RING AROUND THE FLEET IN SEV. ONLY SUSPENSE IS PROVIDED BY FLEETS... WHAT ARE THE RUSSIAN FLEETS AND THE TURKISH F AEG UP TO?

France (Morris): A GAS-Mar; F SPA(sc) S A Gas-Mar; F MID S A Bre;
A BRE H.

Germany (Smith): A Mos-UKR; A Boh-GAL; A Bud-TRI; A VIE S Bud-Tri;
A TRL S Bud-Tri; A PIE-Mar; A BUR S Pie-Mar;
A PAR S Pic; A PIC S Par; F Bel-ENG; F NTH S Bel-Eng;
A Yor-LON.

Italy (Welter) : A Rum-BUD; A SER S A Rum-Bud; A Tri-Vie (to the box!);
F ADR-Tri; A ROM-Ven; F Ion-ALB.

Russia (McKee) : F Lvp-NAT; F Edi-NWG.

Turkey (Tabor): F Sev-RUM; A BUL S F Sev-Rum; A Con-SEV; F Smy-AEG;
F BLA C A Con-Sev; A ARM S A Con-Sev.

Units By Owner, Spring 1908:

Chairman, F. Zappa Fan Club: A Gas F Spa(sc) F Mid A Bre

Satan of the Leisure Suit: A Ukr A Gal A Tri A Vie A Trl A Pie A Bur
A Par A Pic F Eng F Nth A Lon

Den Mom-o-rama: A Bud A Ser F Adr A Rom F Alb

You mean this *isn't* gunboat?: F NAT F Nwg

Oh wow..., it's, like... trails, man... : F Rum A Bul A Sev F Bla
A Arm F Aeg

Russia votes yes to all proposals. However, there were no proposals (that's so... so... well, so McKee, ain't it?). Al also voted on numerous non-specific and non-existent proposals. Sigh. Mark Lew in the latest benzene suggests an entrance test to enter the DipCon tournament... write a set of orders as Italy that gets you Tun in 1901 (he got burned by two successive

Italian allies who couldn't manage it!). Perhaps we need a test for plying here... a) there is a proposal to vote on. b) there is not. Yes Jeff, that is multiple choice. We do have one for your perusal next time, however... a German win. Please remember to vote with your orders. (I'm gonna do a macro to put the next sentence in automatically for me) Remember, NVR=No, but NMR=Yes, and it takes a unanimous vote to end a game. Russia asks that his default be changed to yes. I have no problem with this, feel it is his right to ask it, but I also think other players have the right to know. And now, for some press:

Rom-Mar: a variation on the theme.

Pope to Russian in exile: you really want it this way?

Rom-Con: It's yours.

Con-GM: I dunno. It's not fall, I know that. Beats me what year it is. I wrote down what I want to do but I can't find my map or the turn report. And aliens had taken you PIN out of my numbers file. I mean it had just disappeared. Mysteriously. Everyone else was I mean it had just disappeared. Mysteriously. Everyone else was there. If there were any proposals that included G or R, I vote no. Any remaining that include me are a yes. I thought this was due Friday but Susan said she thinks its due today, so---

(Spa-Ber) Go home and pick on someone your own size, you big bully!

(Spa-Con & Rom) Trust each other, work together, and push North!

Together you can wipe the smirk off Smith's face!

(Spa-Edi) Let your final acts be deeds of honor! Set sail, seek and destroy the German fleets. Sink the Bismarck!

Ber-GM: One of these days we are going to have to start being just as nice to each other as we have been nasty. No one would know what to make of it. It was me who elevated you to godhood you know.

GM-Satan: Is that possible, theologically?

The deadline for Fall/Winter 1907 is, now get this please... midnight EDT, September 20, 1989. The reason is that I'm setting the deadline for the regular PBM games in BTDT to October 7, as it looks like I'm going to have to go to a somewhat slower (5 weeks), but bigger format, so that seems just about right as a half way point.

Elio Chacon

1989J

Fall 1903

BATTLE OF THE GIANTS BEGINS AS TURKISH, ITALIAN FORCES BATTLE IN BALKANS. THAT OL' TURKISH MAGIC WORKS YET AGAIN ON RUSSIAN COMMANDER, MOSCOW FALLS WITHOUT A SHOT. ENGLAND, FRANCE CONTINUE ON THE ROPES IN WEST, TRADE CENTERS ANYWAY. ITALY REPEATS '01 FEAT... 3 BUILDS YET AGAIN!

Summer, 1903: French A Spa retreats to Por. Austrian A Bud retreats OTB, F Gre retreats to Bul (sc).

Austria (Nickel): F Bul(sc) H (annihilated); A VIE-Bud.

England (Hunter): F Eng-BRE; A Bel H (dis: r-Pic, OTB); F NRG-Nwy; F NTH S
F Nrq-Nwy.

France (Moore): A GAS-Spa; A POR S A Gas-Spa; A Par-BUR; F LVP H.

Germany (Rifle): A SPA H; A Bur-MAR; A SIL-Gal; F SKA-Nth; A DEN H;
A HOL S (I) A Ruh-Bel.

Italy (Lutterbie): F LYO S (G) A Spa; F Wes-MID; A Tri-SER; A Ven-TRI;
F GRE H; A Ruh-BEL.

Russia (Williams): A STP S F Nwy; A Mos-WAR; F NWY S (G) F Ska-Nth;
A Bud S (I) A Tri-Ser(dis: r-Alb, OTB).
Turkey (Hoffman): A Con-BUL; F BLA S A Con-Bul; F AEG S A Con-Bul;
A Ser-BUD; A RUM S A Ser-Bud; A UKR-Gal; A Sev-MOS.

Centers By Owner:

Austria: Loses Gre, Bud. Has Vie. 1 (even)
England: Loses Bel, Lvp. Gains Bre. Has Lon, Edi. 3 (-1, or r OTB and even)
France : Loses Spa, Bre. Gains Lvp. Has Por, Par. 3 (-1)
Germany: Gains Spa. Has Mar, Hol, Ber, Den, Kie, Swe. 7 (+1)
Italy : Gains Bel, Gre, Ser. Has Rom, Nap, Ven, Mun, Tri, and Tun. 9 (+3)
Russia : Loses Mos. Has War, Nwy, and StP. 3 (-1, or r-OTB and even)
Turkey : Loses Ser. Gains Bud and Mos. Has Ank, Con, Smy, Sev, Rum, and
Bul. 8 (+1)

Thanks to Steve Heinowski and Paul Milewski for submitting unused standby orders! You're on top of things, guys!

Please note COA for Karl Hoffman: 1070 Cold Stream Circle, Apt. M, Emmaus, PA 18049.

Press:

I -> F: I really enjoyed meeting you at DipCon. If I were to stab for anyone it would be for a good person like you. Unfortunately - George is also a good guy and I feel that I have a strong commitment to him. Hopefully we will meet again.

GM -> Board: Anyone else getting as nauseous as I am by Vince's repeated sweet ramblings to guys he's just stabbed the bejeesus out of? They sound like eulogies... then again, I guess that's exactly what they are!

I -> T: I hope we can avoid conflict. I really want peace - but this game invites paranoia.

I to A: G has 7 and a "short one." A has 7 and does not have a "short one." It doth verily seemeth unto me that if meet portions are rendered, then thou, Austria, shalt be found wanting. You should be content that you do not have a "short one," and let it lie. Do not, I pray you, seize Germany's "short one," despite the leanings of your heart.

R to G: War to the knife, you poltroon! My Turkish slave will see you pay for your offense!

R to E: The German madman will destroy us all!

R to I: Stay out of Ser! It's mine! All Mine!

R to T: Moscow awaits its Anatolian lover.

Winter 1903/Spring 1904 orders are due Oct 7, 1989.

Marv Throneberry

1989IA

Winter 1900

This game started by gamestart flyer last month. As stated then, the players were given an extra deadline for negotiations, although I stated I would adjudicate Spring 1901 if I got all orders by this deadline. I haven't, so the deadline formal deadline for Spring 1901 is Oct 7, 1989.

I have orders on file from: A/E/F/G/R/T.

The players are:

Austria: Karl Hoffman, 1070 Cold Stream Circle, Apt. M, Emmaus, PA 18049.
England: Jimmy Williams, 2352 Le Havre, Lexington, KY 40504.
France : Mickey Preston, 223 Breckinridge Sq. Louisville, KY 40220.
Germany: Benjamin Brandon, 505 Violet Lane, Jackson NJ, 08527
Italy : Nelson Heinzman, 2255 Delaware ave, #C-4, Buffalo, NY 14216

Russia : Marty Norman, 1916 Knob Hill, Plano, TX 75023.
Turkey : Stven Carlberg, 1353 Gray Rock Drive, Marietta GA 30066.

Please note Karl Hoffman's new address and that Stven's first name is Stven, NOT Steven! Please note Boardman Number assigned (thanks Don).

Oh yeah - NOTA BENE - W.A.P. it is for handling NMRs! The vote was clear.

Railway Rivals Chesapeake and Ohio Map 89-13-CO Bo Belinsky

Ken Hill, The Mason-Dixon Line (MDL), starts in Petersburg. Red.
Conrad von Metzke, Trans-Oceanic Markets Never Are So Hot (TOM NASH)
starts in Emporia. Orange.
Paul Gardner, Obese Hotheaded Insensitive Offal haulers (OHIO), starts in
Richmond. Blue.
Doug Brown, Chesapeake Ohio Rail Enterprise (CORE), starts in Richmond.
Brown, of course.
Mickey Preston, Lexington and Louisville Central (L&LC), starts in Emporia.
Black.
Jim Goode, Burgundy Express (BX), starts in Washington. Yellow.

(I can't believe NONE of you picked Baltimore! Either to butter up the GM,
or as a reflection of Railroad history.)

Rolls for first round are 6-4-3.

Note COA for Doug Brown: 3385 Maricopa Court, Cameron Park CA 95682.
(PS - Doug, am I ever gonna see Gonzo Rails? Before the ZR deadline of
September 30th? Does it really exist?)

Deadline for round one is Oct 7, 1989, but as soon as I get all 6 sets of
orders I will go ahead and adjudicate and mail out the results and rolls
for round two. So feel free to mail early.

Jim asks about the apparent ferry lines connecting Norfolk, Newport News,
and Cape Charles. I assume they are routes for building bridges (or bridge-
tunnels, to be accurate) at the regular rate of 1 per hex, a la the new
Japan map, rather than buyable ferries a la the Sweden map. Conrad, your
assistance here would be appreciated. Unless I hear otherwise, I will treat
them this way. Jim also asks about the Kanawha River, if it starts at hex
I14 (between I13 and J13). Sure does on my map! Conrad also advises I pass
along that nothing important is missing along the margins that appear
clipped on this map. The problem is that the British use slightly different
sized paper, and on this map about a half inch ends up getting clipped in
the xerox process.

Railway Rivals Gamestart Spain Map 89-12-SP Felix Mantilla

The Players:

Ken Hill, 6199 Rockland Drive, Dublin, Ohio 43017
Conrad von Metzke, 4374 Donald Ave, San Diego CA 92117
Paul Gardner, 20 Spruce St., Brattleboro, VT, 05301
Doug Brown, 3385 Maricopa Court, Cameron Park CA 95682
Mickey Preston, 223 Breckinridge, Louisville, KY 40220
Jim Goode, APSU Box 4607, Clarksville, TN 37044
John Cain, 76 Banool Road, Balwyn, 3103 Australia
Marlene Zetzer, 5512 Pilgrim Road, Baltimore MD, 21214

You should all have your maps by now. Please send start point (no starting in Madrid, coastal cities only) railway name (some of you have already done so), and color preference ASAP. Again, though the deadline is October 7, if I get info from everyone, I'll send it out with the round one rolls ASAP. Chances are, that this game will be played to the regular deadlines of the zine, with the time mail takes from Australia. And if you haven't seen John's zine Victoriana, sub now. It's a keeper.

Gunboat Dip Gamestart

Winter 1900

Frank Thomas

Countries were selected by random draw.

You are playing _____.

You're paid up _____. You owe me a \$5 gamefee _____.

All shades of press will be allowed, though I reserve the right to censor both press and joke orders for "blatant" negotiating. It's got to be pretty blatant to be censored, but the last Gunboat game I ran this way I did censor 3-4 times!

Deadline for Spring 1901 is October 7, 1989.

CHOO CHOO GAMES: A SPECIAL FEATURE

While typing up last issue of BTDT, I had this sudden inspiration to solicit some articles towards a special issue of sorts on railroad and rail building games. SO I went ahead and solicited a number of articles from a number of people. The final results were better than I feared, but not as good as I'd hoped. I received four articles, all reprinted herein. Eric Brosius on some ideas for speeding up the PBM play of Empire Builder, Ed Wrobel on his recent discovery of Merchant of Venus, a space game he sees as fitting into the choo choo game tradition, Bruce Linsey on his development of a system for playing Empire Builder by mail, and, the piece I'm happiest and proudest to be printing here, an original article by David Watts, the inventor of Railway Rivals, among other games, on the process of that game's birth. So without further ado, I give you choo choo chat:

The Railway Rivals Story - David Watts

As long as I can remember, I've been interested in maps, in railways, and in board games. Not surprisingly, eventually the 3 fused into a single idea. The first glimmerings of what became "RR" were in 1947., when as a sixth-form geography student I was studying Ordnance Survey 1" = 1 mile maps. I noticed that there were often two rail routes between cities, and found that they had once been the work of separate railway companies. What if a third company had also wished to link those cities? It wasn't long before the school's O.S maps had acquired a lot of pencilled-in extra railways!

I became a geography teacher, and often used map-based games which I devised myself as teaching aides (more as an interest-building after-school technique than in classes; games in classes are difficult to organize effectively and quietly!). By about 1969, RR had reached its present form. There was the problem of how to remove the rail routes from the map so that you could reuse it; I experimented with elastic bands, small magnets, pegboards - but nothing was really suitable.

There was also the problem of how to market the game even if it could be finished. British board game companies then were uninterested in my game ideas - as indeed they still are. It was clear that I would have to arrange for manufacture and marketing myself.

The solution to these problems came through the idea of having cheap throwaway maps; they would be drawn up on a simple hex network by the buyers. I bought a small hand press with which, after 8 weekends work, I could complete a page of coloring instructions by which the customer could change the hexsheets into a map. As for marketing, as a result of producing a textbook on Map Projections myself in 1972, I had a long list of possible buyers for the game as educational simulations.

So in 1973 the first 4 versions of RR appeared (the present maps A,B,C,D). Schools were the main customers, but after only a year, this market tailed off. Now they account for less than 1% of sales.

But one teacher was a subscriber to Don Turnbull's wargames zine Albion; he wrote a rave review, and so I discovered the adult board games hobby. This led to the postal games zines, and in 1975 the first postal RR game appeared in Mick Bullock's "1901 And All That". Then there was contact with the new "Games and Puzzles," the Games Centre chain of shops, and a couple of bright lads called Steve Jackson and Ian Livingstone, who were starting a new business called "Games Workshop."

One of the key points of RR is illustrated by the fact that at the start I issued 4 maps together: that the same rules can fit hundreds of different maps. At present, I sell 22, and there are 30 trial maps as well; many enthusiasts have devised dozens of their own designs.

Sales rose almost continually, but slowly. The format was improved: in 1977 the first ready-printed maps; in 1979, the first 3-colour laminated ones. Among the readers of "Albion" was a Swiss, Walter Luc Haas, and through the years we corresponded regularly. In 1979 a German printing firm, Butehorn, wished to expand their business, and started a board games division. WLH wrote regular columns in several papers on board games, so they asked him to recommend some new ones. They issued their version of RR - curiously going back to the old throwaway map idea - in 1980, but in 1982 they went out of business, owing me a lot of royalties!

However, Schmidt (#2 on the German board games scene) had seen the game, & reckoned they could do it better, so they took over the license. Curiously, they didn't use my maps, but designed their own. They were unplayable! Thus, the western USA map needed a 300 mile tunnel to cross the Rockies (but the Sierra Nevada was no obstacle at all), while cities such as St. Louis and Chicago were ignored in favor of Lubbock and Jefferson City.

Fortunately by then RR had attracted such a following in Germany that lots of people told Schmidt what a mess they'd made of the idea, and I re-drew the maps for them. This revised version won the German "Game of the Year" award in 1984, and became a best seller. The first royalty check was for a larger amount than my total receipts for the previous 12 years! Since then, Germany had continued to provide about 75% of my games income.

Then Games Workshop took up the idea, and from 1985 until early this year marketed the game in Britain and USA. Unfortunately, it's completely out of their usual style of game; their fans didn't like it, while people who would never find it among all the usual GW stuff. In the USA they sold less than one copy a day! Not surprisingly, it has now been withdrawn.

I continue to devise new maps for RR, and also new map-based games on other themes. As always, the RR maps are designed knowing the answers - they are drawn to encourage you to reproduce the actual lines. So a study of rail atlases, or knowing the railway history of an area, will help you to win this game.

I'm in the happy position of being able to make money from my hobby; not a fortune, indeed, but enough to supplement my teacher's pension, and enough to stop my wife criticizing the amount of my time that it takes up!

- David Watts, Milford Haven, July 1989.

Postal Empire Builder? Yea! - Bruce Linsey

Maybe it's just that I'm an incorrigible postal freak, but whenever I learn a new game and like it, my first thought is "how can this be adapted for postal play?" Thus, when Empire Builder became my favorite game about four years ago, I sought a way to run it by mail.

The endeavor took a lot of effort. Unlike Diplomacy, which is tailor-made for postal play, EB is much better suited for face-to-face play. The reasons for this are:

- 1) Players move in sequence, not simultaneously;
- 2) A lot of things can happen right in the middle of a turn which will affect the players' later actions in that turn; and
- 3) A game lasts about 60-70 turns per player.

These all had to be overcome in order to allow for postal play. Clearly the game's format would have to be altered so that all players would submit orders simultaneously. To accomplish this, I devised a rotating "Order of Play" schedule so that orders would all be due at once, but if a conflict arose (such as two players trying to build the same track section), whoever was higher in the order for that particular turn would get priority. Thus, the game became manageable in terms of overall number of turns: instead of 60-70 turns per player, we now had 60 or 70 turns overall. In practice, we call these "turns" in which everyone goes at once a "round."

Since negotiating is not a major consideration in EB, I ran the game on two-week deadlines, making the game comparable in length to a (rather long) postal Dip game.

But there still remained the problem of there being far too many "branch points" in a turn. In face-to-face, this just means a brief pause now and then while a player makes a quick decision. Postally, however, this translated potentially to overwhelming sets of conditional orders. The solution was found by Mark Lew. Since the vast majority of branch points occur when a player draws a replacement card after a sale, why not just draw all replacement cards after everyone has moved and built? And that suggestion did the trick. In practice, I ended up dividing each round into 3 phases: 1) movement and product action, 2) building and upgrading, and 3) drawing replacement cards. Each phase is resolved for all the players before the next; and within each phase, we go by that round's Order of Play.

The remaining problems were purely mechanical. I spent countless hours devising (and revising) a format for reporting the players' actions each round. The one I eventually settled on in TRAX is reasonably clear. The map had to be reduced to fit on a single page. I started out by drawing it in color for each player, each round, but you can guess how long that lasted! A few turns into the game, I began using line symbols for track instead.!! While the color was obviously nicer, the symbols are certainly adequate. I wrote up a comprehensive set of houserules, and used the revisions to the rules and deck that my local group had already adopted, and... viola! Postal Empire Builder was off and running! The game's inventor, and president of Mayfair Games, Darwin Bromley, was extremely supportive throughout all of this, even giving me credit for the design, playtesting, and traxmastering the first postal game; all in the new version's game box.

As for the postal hobby, TRAX is about to end, but Paul Gardner, Conrad von Metzke, and Pete Gaughan are all running EB (or its sister game British Rails) by rail, so I think we're getting well established. And I feel proud of that, because it's a wonderful game.

Thoughts on Speeding Up PBM Empire Builder - Eric Brosius

I'd like to elaborate on my suggestion for speeding up Empire Builder and British Rails.

When you suggested that these games are better suited to FTF games than PBM ones, I immediately reacted negatively. I'm always frustrated when I play these things FTF because some of the things I'd like to do, count mileposts, examine the rest of the deck, and consider my options carefully - just take too long to be reasonable. Perhaps after hundreds of FTF games these things become instinctive, but I jumped at the chance to play in a game where I'd have all the time I needed.

Of course, as you point out, these games take forever PBM, especially in a zine with the schedule of Perelandra. I'm patient, and can always sign up for other games to play while waiting for my BR results. But the real problems is not just the number of turns, but the number of turns a player must wait for a move, then order "move 12 to San Francisco." This doesn't feel like a move at all, since you had no real decisions to make.

In a well designed PBM game each player has the chance to make significant decisions each turn (that is, mailing). Could we call the "the First Law of PBM Game Design?" Looking at it from this point of view, we see that PBM Diplomacy uses combined seasons to prevent any player from being stuck making no decisions at a Winter, Summer, or Autumn deadline. With combined seasons every mailing contains a Spring or Fall turn - one in which each player has decisions to make.

For the most part decisions in EB arise when cards are drawn, except in the initial building phase. Thus, if we can see before round 4 is played that no cards will be drawn, we can combine rounds 4 & 5 and the resulting conditional orders should be within any player's ability to write. I made such a proposal to Pete Gaughan for the BR game "Gramarye," and I cannot see that it was a burden to anyone.

The simplest step to speeding up EB, then, is to add the following (Houserule A): "Whenever the TM suspects that no cards will be drawn on the upcoming round, he may request moves from the players for two rounds. The 2 rounds will be played in succession using the orders submitted unless 1) a card is in fact drawn in the first round, or (optionally) 2) two or more players request a separation."

This rule is a good one, I think, and should not harm anyone. Unfortunately it will not be used very often. This is because although any given player draws a card only every so often, the chance that none of the eight players will draw a card is quite small. As a result, each turn has a few players drawing cards and planning strategies while the others just move their trains and wish the game would go faster.

After thinking though the above, I said to myself (in a contemplative sort of way) "wouldn't it be nice if we could synchronize the game so all the players had their exciting turns (the ones on which they draw cards) on the same rounds and all had their boring turns on the same rounds. If this happened we could apply Houserule A more frequently and the game would really pick up speed. Even better, players would get new cards with every mailing, leading to a greater level of interest." Suddenly, inspiration struck! If we refused to give out new cards except on certain chosen rounds, the other rounds would have to be boring, and we could combine them. Thus, we get Houserule B (for BR): "Rounds 1, 2, and 3 will be played

separately as normal." (The First Law holds fine here). "From there on, rounds will be combined in threes; thus rounds 4, 5, and 6 will be played together, then rounds 7, 8, and 9, and so on. Orders for any round may be conditional on the results of any previous round, or even on prior actions in the same round. No separations will be granted. No cards will be dealt until the last round of a group of three, even if a player has no cards left." (Because he has delivered 3 loads or dumped cards). "At the end of a group of 3 rounds, a player will receive enough cards to bring him up to 3."

Houserule B is quite simple in concept, and will speed up games by a factor of 3 (after the opening building rounds). Unlike Houserule A it undeniably changes the game, but who cares if the change is for the better? It also assures the better compliance with the First Law, as after 3 turns nearly every player will have delivered some load (in Gramarye 6 out of 7 players made at least one delivery in rounds 4-6). The effect of disasters will be lessened - they can occur only in rounds 2,3,4,7,10,13,16, ... Players dumping cards can do so only every 3 rounds, making it harder to stop a leader, which speeds things up even more.

I think a game run under Houserule B would be exciting and fast-moving. It would also require more planning. If run on 3 week deadlines, it should take a little over a year. Anyone interested?

-Eric Brosius, 41 Hayward St., Milford MA 01757

The Unchoochoo Game - Ed Wrobel.

What is it about choo-choo games? Wherein lies the fascination? Is it the fantasy of role-playing a wealthy and powerful capitalist? Is it the romance of the rails? Is it the generative nature of the games, a welcome relief from the wanton destruction of wargaming?

Nah - none of that fancy psychological doo-dah. It's good game systems and attractive chrome. It's the roll of the dice and the flourish of the crayon. It's smashing mountains, laying track, and anticipating the market. It's fun.

The Avalon Hill Game Company's "Merchant of Venus" is such a game, no less than choo-choos in space! Well, no, there's no track to be laid to Alpha Centuri, but you can purchase different types of ships (engines), more variety than most games, some bigger and slower, some faster. And different types of "drives," allowing your ship to "warp" over certain spots without expending a dot from your movement dice. Try that on your way to Chicago along the PA!

But the basic feel of the game is choo-choo. You roll dice and your little marker chugs around the galaxy, discovering lost races, buying products at wholesale and delivering them at an ungodly mark-up to other planets desperate for mulch wine, finest dust, or impossible furniture. After all, you got expenses, overhead, a lifestyle to maintain. Besides you want to be the first merchant to accumulate 2K and win (1K for a short game and 4K for fanatics).

The map is quite attractive, and has some interesting features. Numerous "intersections" can send your ship in an unwanted direction depending on a dice roll. Exploring mysterious asteroids can yield useful, free "relics," telegates allowing instant transport across far reaches of space or expensive blockades. The various races, with distinctive products and needs, are secretly and randomly distributed each game, among the systems printed on the board.

Unlike Rail Baron and Empire Builder, you are free to choose destinations and cargo (although races are discriminating in their purchases... you can't sell mulch wine to moslems, for example). There's a

solitaire version of the game, and it's also good for 2 or more players. Optional rules introduce weaponry for merchants who like that extra interactive kick. Otherwise, the players compete for products and "demand" chits which boost income from delivery. You can also build factories and spaceports (but such investments may not be lucrative).

The game has much to recommend it. There's sufficient variety to keep it fresh. It accommodates almost any number of players. The chrome is fun for sci-fi fans. It doesn't take forever to play. And it's really a choo-choo game in disguise.

Time for a littel space filler. Last time I tolf you about Susan Welter's wonderful "Diplomat's Excuse T-Shirt", and her pack of hand illustrated Diplomact post cards, this time I get to tell you about Steve Smith's popcorn. Steve Smith, my sworn arch-enemy for life, arch nemesis on the Dip board, one of the smoothest and sneakiest liars ever to promise to stay out of the channel, and the man we call "the K-Mart Satan," and, naturally, "Leisure Suit Lucifer" in The Armchair Diplomat, has left behind the bittersweet temptations of Chiago life to return to the family farm in Nebraska and go into business with, I believe, his brother, to grow, package, and market microwave popcorn on the ear. Called "Pops Almighty," the product is sold in gourmet and speciality stores, and is, precisely that, an ear of microwavable popcorn. Stick the ear in a provided microwave bag, pop it in the zapper, turn on the radiation, and watch the kernels pop right off the ear.

We tried it a few times, and besides the popcorn being good, kids (ours at least) love to watch the corn pop right off the ear! Adults too. We've already decided to get some to give as Christmas gifts.

I asked Steve to provide me with some info, and he says:

"Prices on product are:

	Regular	Distributor		
Single Ear	\$1.00/pkg	\$0.80	48 pkgs/case	14 lbs
Triple Ear	\$2.95/pkg	\$2.36	16 pkgs/case	14 lbs
Basket	\$4.75/basket	\$4.00	20 baskets/case	27 lbs
Jar	\$5.25/Jar	\$4.25	12 jars/case	35 lbs

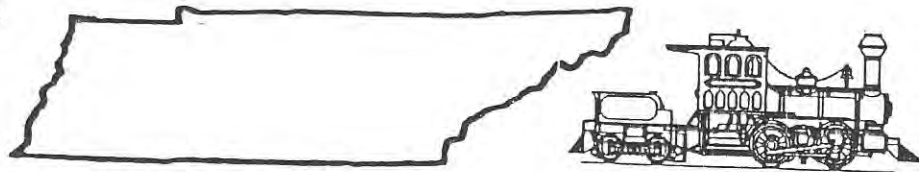
All sales are FOB NE + UPS freight
One case is the minimum order.

I sell directly.

Sure I would love to have you drum up some business. To anyone here on the forum who would like to buy I will sell them to you for distributor prices. If you want to go out and resell them at regular prices more power to you.

The only thing I have to worry about is infringing on my brokers territory. That means I may have to ask you to stop selling if that ever becomes a problem."

Steve's address is: HC 86, Box 2, Lamar, NE 69035.



TENNESSEE RAILS

Please make yourself at home. You are being introduced to a new subzine dedicated to the play of the Tennessee variant map of David Watts' Railway Rivals. The goal for Tennessee Rails is to sponsor 2 to 4 games on the Tennessee map, then transform itself into Texas Rails for the Texas variant map now being developed.

Deadlines will conform to Tom Nash's Been There, Done That, but the subzine will also be carried by Scott Cameron's Protozoan on an as-wanted basis for his subbers. Deadlines will follow BTDT -- if deadlines vary greatly between BTDT and Proto, then a few issues may have to be mailed directly from the pubber to Proto subbers.

Play-by-mail Railway Rivals games are generally scheduled for 12 turns. The first 6 are for track building with the balance for races and any supplemental building that players choose to make. Thus, one game should take roughly a year.

In addition to the game reports, TR will include a bit of background info on railroads & Tennessee. Gamefees for TR will be FREE (what a deal). However, Tom and Scott may add a surcharge to their zine subfees to cover any extra postage and photocopying expenses incurred as a result of carrying TR.

Hoping for a fast start, the pubber is setting a declaration-of-interest deadline to be as-soon-as-possible. If you think you are interested, write pronto for a map and any other info that you think you may need. The pubber will pronto mail a map and call for your first build with the goal of publishing results of the first turn next issue.

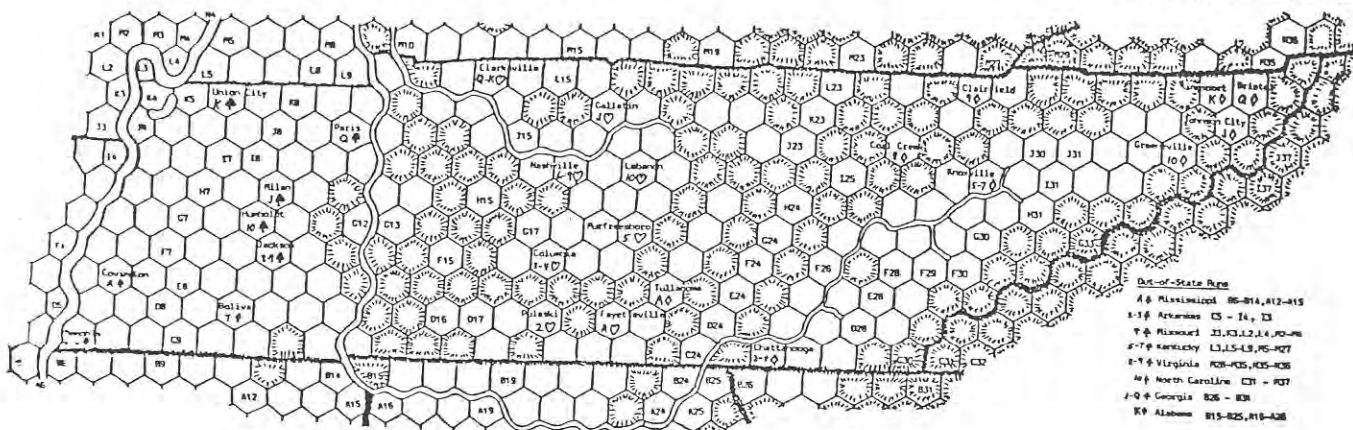
How radical are you? If you want to play in more than one of these games, you are encouraged to do so. However, please note that you will not be permitted to use the same set of opening builds in more than one game. In other words, if you want to play in 3 or 4 games on this map, send 3 or 4 sets of opening moves. The GM will assign players to games based on their openings in an effort to create a balanced start in each game. The GM may close entries without notice when these games are full.

For a full-size copy of the map, write: James K. Goode
211 Maplemere

Clarksville, TN 37040-3558

For those with microscopic vision:

(615) 647-7272



"The wave of railroad building which swept the country in the 1830's met at first with little response in Middle and West Tennessee, served as they were with an adequate system of waterway communication. East Tennesseans, however, were fervent advocates of railroad construction. Hemmed in between the Alleghenies on the east and the Cumberland Mountains on the west -- over which it was then impossible to build good highways -- the people of East Tennessee were at a tremendous economic disadvantage. The railroad was the only solution. The Railroad Advocate, said to have been the first paper in the United States devoted exclusively to railroad promotion, began publication at Rogersville on July 4, 1831."

from Tennessee: A Guide to the State, Federal Writers' Project, 1939, page 94.

"The LaGrange and Memphis Railroad at first refused to accept the state-aid law of 1838 because it required actual payments by private subscribers as a precedent to the issuance of state bonds. Later it obtained a state subscription to one-half of its stock on its own terms and eventually received a total of \$216,250 in state bonds. ... By the end of 1841 it had graded the major portion of the road and laid the rails for a distance of about ten miles at the Memphis end. ... Early in 1842 a locomotive arrived from Philadelphia and was escorted to the tracks by a brass band. At first the engineer was unable to get it started, but a few days later the train got under way and transported a handful of frightened passengers on a round trip to a turntable about six miles from Memphis. A few months later the sheriff of Shelby County took possession of the property because of unsatisfied court judgements. ... In 1850 a national publication, the Railroad Gazette, published some statistics giving the estimated mileage of Southern railroads in operation on January 1 of that year: Georgia, 631; Alabama, 111; Mississippi, 98; Kentucky, 28; and Tennessee, 0."

from History of Tennessee, Folmsbee, Corlew & Mitchell, 1960, pages 386-389.

"Beginning in the late 1840s, ... the legislature began chartering railroad companies with alacrity. In 1850 the state agreed to issue bonds up to \$350,000 for the purchase of rails and equipment by the East Tennessee and Georgia Railroad Company. Two years later the process was regularized when the state decided to grant aid to railroad companies in the form of bonds, based on \$8,000 per mile, to help pay for rails and equipment. ... The railroad boom was on. In 1850 the state had not a single mile of operational railroad lines; in 1860 it had 1,200 miles. But the bands of iron that annihilated time and space were not able to conquer Tennessee's sectionalism or, for the moment, its rugged topography. Almost without exception, the railroad lines followed north-south routes, each section of the state attempting to link itself with neighboring states rather than with another part of Tennessee. ... The state government ... apparently never thought to devise or to insist upon a plan to create a network of rails that would bind together the state's three divisions."

from Paths of the Past, Paul H. Bergeron, 1979, pages 51-52.

"The first railroad completed in Tennessee was the Nashville and Chattanooga. The incorporation of the company, in December, 1845, was the result of a vigorous campaign waged ... to overcome the indifference of a city apparently wedded to steamboat navigation. ... (The state geologist aided the venture, reporting on) the feasibility of the road and the abundance of mineral resources ... along the route. ... To avoid much of the mountain barrier, the route chosen dipped down into Alabama and approached Chattanooga along the Tennessee River. ... The only aid received from the state was the endorsement of the company's bonds; the total amount was \$1,500,000. With the aid of booming business during the Civil War, the company was able to pay off the bonds when they came due. Thus the Nashville and Chattanooga was not only the first Tennessee road completed but also the only one which the state aided without suffering any financial loss."

from History of Tennessee, Folmsbee, Corlew & Mitchell, 1960, pages 391-392.

BEEN THERE, DONE THAT # 8 - ADDENDUM (DICK MARTIN COMES THROUGH - LATE).

One of the articles promised me for the Choo Choo Issue Special was Dick Martin on 1830. Well Dick was late. Period. He opted to go to Brad Wilson's house con and then write negotiating letters rather than fulfill his obligation. Hey (Don Williams, ignore that "hey"), I'm not passing a value judgement, them's the facts. BUT when I told him of how much it meant to Ed Wrobel, who truly idolizes Dick, to appear in the same issue, and how much he'd be hurt if it didn't happen, the guilt got to him. So he sent it Email to me, just in time to make it in the main body of BTDT before it got printed. But, and there's always a but, isn't there, his communications software did something funny and ate the bulk of the article (can't trust that Mac stuff, eh?). By the time we got it sorted out and resent^d, it was too late to make the min body of the zine, so here it is...

A Dumb Article About A Great Game - Dick Martin

As I sit here listening to the B52s debut album, wondering how in the world I'll ever fulfill my silly promise to Tom Nash of one choo choo article, 1830 variety, I've decided that suicide is too drastic a measure. Pounding out a few paragraphs about my current favorite game can't be so hard. Nah, not when the entire first paragraph can be blown off like this.

For the past year or so, Avalon Hill's 1830 has been the game of choice for me, as well as much of the Washington Area Retinue of (Tacitly) Highly Organized Gamesters. It's easy to see why: 1830 is a fairly simple game to learn, can be finished in a single afternoon, is very well-balanced, has no luck involved, and has many different "winning" strategies. Simply put, it is the most enjoyable rail game on the market, and I've played them all (and at least one that's not even on the market yet). Perhaps the only drawback to 1830 is that it is best played with five or six players, and it may be difficult to find that many worthy opponents (though the three and four player versions are both good).

The two main differences between 1830 and the competition are the elimination of the luck factor and the addition of a stock market. 1830 has no dice, cards, or random events. The only element of chance is in the initial seating arrangement and thus order of play. Since the first player to go changes from turn to turn, drawing any particular position has only trivial importance. As a result, all eventualities can be (at least theoretically) foreseen and planned for.

The addition of a stock market to 1830 shifts the emphasis from simply running trains from one place to another to a complex balance between running lines and profiting from their ownership. It is no longer a question of just buying the biggest, fastest engine as quickly as possible and grabbing the best routes possible. No, the prudent player must decide if this will harm the other companies he holds stock in, or close out other companies he may be buying into in the future.

1830 is balanced by these two factors. Owning stock in one particular line is not inherently better than any other, and you usually own at least a little bit of everything. Owning a particular private company doesn't give any crushing advantage or disadvantage. Going last isn't necessarily any worse than going first. A few bad die rolls or sets of cards won't kill you, since there aren't any cards or dice.

But for me, the best thing about 1830 is that there is no set winning

strategy. I've played the game over thirty times now, and tried almost that many different strategies. Only a few turned out to be total dogs, and most have either turned out to be winners or at least kept me in the running. Far as I can tell, for every strategy there seems to be a counter strategy. The game continues to impress me with the subtleties required to master it, even though the rules are so simple (I'd played half a dozen games before getting around to reading the rules, and found that I hadn't missed anything).

So before I wrap this up (I hope to finish before 53 Miles West of Venus does), here are a couple words of wisdom to the beginning players out there. First and foremost, do what is best for your companies and the companies you hold. Don't worry as much about screwing over your opponents as you do about maximizing your own position. That doesn't mean you shouldn't drop down a station marker if it'll hurt opposing lines, just don't do it unless doing so helps you in some way. After all, you may later find yourself owner of the victimized railroad.... Second, differentiate your holdings from your opposition. If your main opponent has five shares of a company and so do you, for instance, sell yours out and buy another company if any are available. In so doing you'll reduce his share value while giving yourself a brand new prospect. And you'll often be able to buy back a share or two at a reduced rate on the next stock round. Third, stay fully invested. Cash in hand does nothing for you. Only by owning stock in running rail lines can you make money. Sure, be careful, but owning one share of any stock never hurts if the alternative is to have the cash in your hand. Fourth, never be afraid to try something new. It's the best way to learn the game, keeps it interesting, and you may just discover the sure-win strategy I haven't been able to find yet.

Now I hope this boring article hasn't put you off 1830 permanently. If your appetite has been whetted for more, check out Volume 23, Number 6 of the AH General for several better articles on 1830. And give the game a try. After all, I was convinced I'd hate 1830 before playing it the first time, and look at me now: a raving robber baron of the first degree!